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(71) Applicant: KABUSHIKI KAISHA ISHIDA KOKI  
SEISAKUSHO

44, Shogoin Sannou-cho Sakyo-ku  
Kyoto-shi Kyoto 606(JP)

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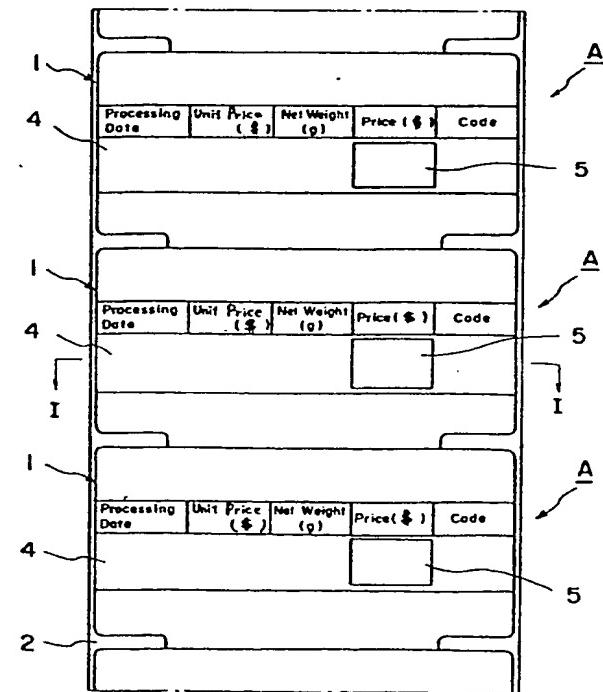
(72) Inventor: Kawaguchi, Hatsuo  
417 Motomochi  
Hatashou-cho Echi-gun Shiga(JP)

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(74) Representative: Skone James, Robert Edmund et al,  
GILL JENNINGS & EVERY 53-64 Chancery Lane  
London WC2A 1HN(GB)

(54) Composite label and its manufacture.

(57) A composite label (A) comprising a substrate (1) carrying at predetermined locations subsidiary thermosensitive label areas (4, 5) of materials which develop different colours at substantially the same temperature.



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KABUSHIKI KAISHA ISHIDA

KOKI SEISAKUSHO

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COMPOSITE LABEL AND ITS MANUFACTURE

This invention relates to a composite label capable of developing a number of colours.

A weighing and pricing apparatus currently in wide use operates by weighing a product by means of an electronic scale, printing information such as product name, unit price, weight and overall price on a label by a printer operatively associated with the electronic scale, packing the weighed product and then adhering the printed label to the surface of the product package.

Various labels and printers are employed in the above-described apparatus. One form of label in wide use is a thermosensitive label, which is so designed that only those portions of the label heated to a prescribed temperature of, e.g., about 80 to 90°C, will change colour. To print characters on a thermosensitive label in accordance with the prior art, a length of strippable paper carrier having a predetermined number of the thermosensitive labels adhered thereto is loaded into a thermal printer, and the paper carrier is fed through the printer at prescribed increments. Within the printer, a thermosensitive printing head is brought into pressured contact with the thermosensitive

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labels adhered to the paper carrier, and predetermined ones of a multiplicity of heating elements in the printing head are momentarily heated to print the abovementioned information on the labels at designated locations.

With the foregoing conventional method, however, the label is capable of developing only a single colour, such as the colour black, so that certain items of printed information cannot be emphasized or made easier to read by distinguishing them from other items of information by means of different colours.

Although there has been developed a thermosensitive label capable of developing two colours such as black and red by changing the temperature of the applied heat, it is not possibly rapidly to change the heating temperature produced by the heating elements of the printing head. This makes it difficult to change the colour of a row of print simultaneously from one colour to the other during printing. The end result is that thermoprinting is performed through use of only one colour, say black or red.

In accordance with a first aspect of the present invention, a composite label comprises a substrate carrying at predetermined locations subsidiary thermosensitive label areas of materials which develop different colours at substantially the same temperature.

Accordingly, with the present invention a composite label is provided on which characters can be printed in a variety of colours by means of a thermal printer, thereby rendering the printed information easier to read and enabling certain information to be emphasized. Different coloured characters or the like

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can be printed on the same composite label with an ordinary thermal printer by applying the same temperature to the various colour developing areas simultaneously by means of the thermal printing head.

5 In accordance with a second aspect of the present invention, a method of manufacturing a strip of such composite labels comprises adhering an elongate strip of first thermosensitive material on a substrate to  
10 an elongate carrier paper; printing fixed information onto the first thermosensitive material at spaced positions along the strip; printing areas of a second thermosensitive material on the first sensitive material; and cutting the elongate strip of first  
15 thermosensitive material into sections corresponding to individual composite labels.

An example of a composite label and its manufacture will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

20 Figure 1 is a partial plan view of a strip of composite labels; and,

Figure 2 is a section taken on the line I-I in Figure 1.

Figure 1 illustrates a strip of composite labels  
25 A. Each label A includes a substrate 1 the reverse side (underside) of which is adhered to a strip of carrier paper 2 by means of an adhesive 3. As shown in Figure 1, a number of composite labels A are adhered in successive fashion to the strip of carrier paper 2.  
30 In use, the labels A, following the printing of information thereon by a thermal printer, are stripped off the carrier paper 2 one at a time and are adhered

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to weighed and packaged products.

Each composite label A, in addition to the substrate 1, further comprises a first colour developing material 4 applied over the entire obverse side 5 (top side) thereof for developing a first colour e.g. black, when heated to a prescribed temperature, and a second colour developing material 5 applied to the surface of the first colour developing material 4 at a predetermined location for developing a second colour, 10 e.g. red, which is different from the first colour, when heated to approximately the same temperature as the first colour developing material 4. Characters for a predetermined label format reading, e.g. "PROCESSING DATE", "CODE", the shop's name, and 15 including even graphics, may be printed on the surface of the first colour developing material 4 by an ordinary ink printer. Numerical information and the like which may change from day to day is printed on the colour developing material 4 under the proper heading by a 20 thermal printer. In the illustrated embodiment, the second colour developing material 5 is to have a price printed thereon by a thermal printer and is therefore applied to the surface of the first colour developing material 4 in the "PRICE" column where the label A 25 is to show that information, i.e. the product price.

In printing, the label A, borne by the carrier paper 2, is loaded into an ordinary thermal printer where prescribed locations on the label A are heated to print predetermined information such as product 30 name, processing date, unit price, weight and price. With the thermosensitive label A of the illustrated embodiment, the information in all columns, with the exception of the "PRICE" column (Figure 1), will be

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printed in black on the material 4. Only the information in the latter column will be printed in red, owing to the second colour developing material 5 applied thereto. Thus, characters of two colours can be

5 printed on the same composite label without using different temperatures. The use of different printing colours makes the label easier to read and allows certain information, such as price, to be emphasized.

In the illustrated embodiment, only two colour  
10 developing materials are applied to the substrate 1 of the thermosensitive label A. This does not represent a limitation, however, as more than two different colour developing materials may be applied to permit the printing of characters in various colours,  
15 or the same second colour developing material 5 may be applied to different spaced areas of the material 4.

The composite label A may be manufactured in the following manner.

Monochromic thermosensitive paper is readily  
20 available in the form of an elongate sheet of considerable length and width rolled into a roll of some diameter. The thermosensitive paper consists of a paper backing the entire obverse side of which already has a colour developing material applied thereto. The  
25 paper backing and colour developing material constitute the substrate 1 and the first colour developing material 4, respectively, of the embodiment illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. To manufacture the composite label, this thermosensitive sheet is pulled from the roll as  
30 the latter rotates, during which time the adhesive 3 is applied to the entire reverse side of the sheet. Meanwhile, the carrier paper 2 in sheet form is pulled

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from a roll thereof having the same width as the thermosensitive sheet and is brought into contact with the reverse side of the thermosensitive sheet so that the two sheets are laminated and bonded together by the adhesive 3. During this process, 5 the laminated sheets are taken up by a separate roll after being cut. Specifically, a plurality of cutters are disposed in side-by-side relation in the path of the laminated sheets being taken up by the last-mentioned roll and serve to cut the laminated sheets 10 into a plurality of elongate strips of considerable width, corresponding approximately to four or five times the "length" of the final product label (i.e. the lateral dimension of the label shown in 15 Figure 1).

Next the roll of strips having the aforementioned width is loaded into an ordinary, e.g. ink, printing machine which prints plural rows of the label format onto each strip, the format including the label frame 20 and items reading "PROCESSING DATE", "PRICE", "CODE", etc (see Figure 1). The machine also cuts each wide strip, consisting of the laminated carrier paper and thermosensitive sheet, into strips of a width equivalent to the "length" of the final product and, at the 25 same time, cuts solely the thermosensitive sheet transversely without severing the carrier paper 2. Unused portions of the carrier paper 2, namely portions from which the labels A are absent, are taken up and removed by a separate roll. The second colour developing 30 material 5 may also be printed on (in ink) by the printing machine during this step.

The foregoing manufacturing steps provide a number

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of composite label rolls each consisting of an elongate strip containing a multiplicity of the labels A adhered individually to the underlying paper carrier 2. The final step is to rewind each roll onto a paper 5 core of specified dimensions. The total number of labels A wound onto the core will depend upon the user's instructions. A typical figure is 5,000 to 10,000 labels.

The above-described manufacturing steps are 10 performed automatically by machine. Moreover, even if the composite labels produced are capable of developing more than two colours, the steps for manufacturing the same are only a few more than required for the monochromatic composite label (i.e. two 15 colours only). Accordingly, there is but little influence upon manufacturing cost.

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CLAIMS

1. A composite label (A) comprising a substrate (1) carrying at predetermined locations subsidiary thermosensitive label areas (4, 5) of materials which develop different colours at substantially the same temperature.
- 5 2. A composite label (A) according to claim 1, wherein a first subsidiary label area (4) covers a surface of the substrate (1); and a second subsidiary label area (5) of different material than the first subsidiary label area (4) is provided on a portion of 10 the first subsidiary label area.
- 10 3. A composite label (A) according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein at least two subsidiary label areas (4,5) are provided, the subsidiary label areas developing black and red in use.
- 15 4. A strip of composite labels according to any of claims 1 to 3, each composite label (A) being removably mounted on a strip of carrier paper (2).
- 15 5. A method of manufacturing a strip of composite labels (A) according to claim 4, the method comprising 20 adhering an elongate strip of first thermosensitive material on a substrate (1) to an elongate carrier paper (2); printing fixed information onto the first thermosensitive material at spaced positions along the strip; printing areas of a second thermosensitive material 25 (5) on the first thermosensitive material (4); and cutting the elongate strip of first thermosensitive material into sections corresponding to individual composite labels (A).

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6. A method according to claim 5, wherein the elongate strip of first thermosensitive material (4) is laminated to the elongate carrier paper (2).
7. A method according to claim 5 or claim 6, wherein the areas of second thermosensitive material  
5 (5) are printed at positions with a predetermined relationship to the fixed information.

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Fig. 1

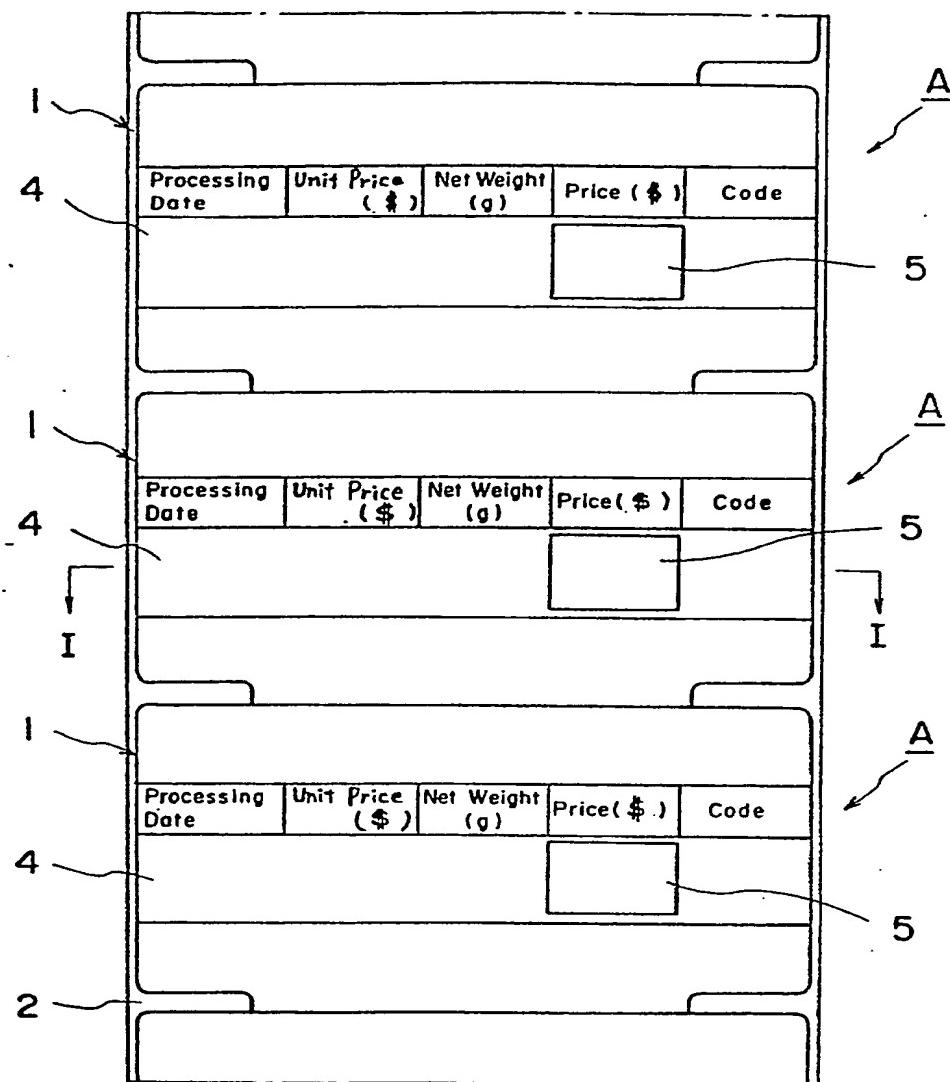
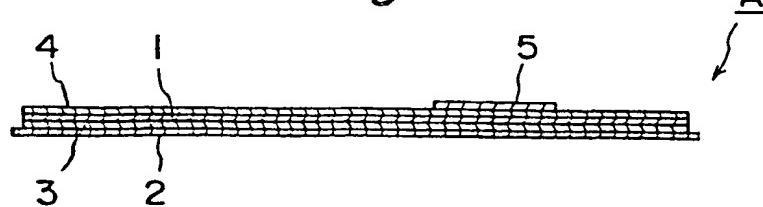


Fig. 2



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